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BEFORE THE TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
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Madam Chairman and members of the Committee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the FY 2003 budget and programs of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). As the new Administrator for NHTSA, I am looking forward to working with you. The long-standing support of this Committee has allowed NHTSA to make significant advances in highway safety for the Nation. I am very pleased to appear with the other panel members to discuss significant highway safety issues.

NHTSA's FY 2003 budget request of $430 million supports the Administration's goals of providing a citizen centered, results oriented, and market based government. In concert with the Department of Transportation's priorities of safety and security, growing transportation system capacity, and fostering competition, NHTSA's budget supports programs directed at significantly improving the Nation's highway safety by reducing the number of highway-related fatalities and injuries and the resultant traffic-related health care and other economic costs. The agency's highway safety programs continue to place primary emphasis on developing, promoting, and implementing national educational, engineering, and enforcement programs aimed at reducing the number and severity of road collisions and mitigating the consequences of crashes.

NHTSA's programs have demonstrated a long-standing positive influence on decreasing highway traffic-related injuries and their devastating economic impact, which amounts to over $150 billion annually. We are pleased to report that the Department has met both the highway fatality and injury targets established for FY 2000. As a result of NHTSA's continuing program support, traffic fatalities decreased from 51,091 in 1980 to 41,821 in 2000. Non-occupant fatalities also continue to decline, and fatalities among children aged 0 to 4 and 5 to 15 are steadily decreasing. The child passenger restraint use rate has also risen radically over the past few years, as child passenger fatalities continue to decline. From 1990 to 2000, the number of younger drivers (aged 15 to 24 years old) involved in fatal crashes declined 14 percent, and the percentage of intoxicated drivers in the 16 to 20 year old group who are involved in fatal crashes declined by 29 percent. In addition, passenger vehicle occupant fatalities and non-occupant fatalities both declined, 0.1 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively, from 1999 to 2000.

However, despite this impressive track record, recent statistics reveal motorcycle fatalities are up 15 percent from 1999; vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death for persons aged 4 to 33; and although seat belt use increased by six percent from 1999 to 2001, it improved by only two percentage points over the last two years. In addition, alcohol-related fatalities increased from 38 percent in 1999 to 40 percent in 2000. Obviously, much more needs to be done, and NHTSA is dedicated to meeting the challenges.

Program Highlights:

Results Oriented Performance Measures

NHTSA's FY 2003 budget is both performance-based and results oriented. In order to assure that our programs are working, we need to have reasonable targets and reliable methods to measure our progress. NHTSA is working to develop improved and more realistic methods of establishing and measuring the alcohol-related fatality target and the seat belt use target.

Alcohol-related Fatality Target Revision

The targets specified in the agency's FY 2001 and FY 2002 performance plans were interpretations of a goal to reduce alcohol-related highway fatalities to 11,000 by 2005. NHTSA believes this was not a realistic goal. Additionally, the measure used to track progress toward those targets, percentage of highway fatalities that are alcohol related, does not present an accurate picture of progress. This is because, as overall fatalities decline-due to increases in seat belt use and effects of other safety countermeasures-the percentage of alcohol-related fatalities could increase. NHTSA is in the process of arriving at a more realistic goal by analyzing data from previous years.

Seat Belt Use Target Revision

Seat belt use in 2001 increased to 73 percent-an all-time high. Yet, this rate was well below the 86 percent target for 2001. That target was based on a stretch goal of 90 percent use by 2005. NHTSA determined that this performance target was also unrealistic and required revising. Continuing to convert the number of non-seat belt users each year becomes more difficult, as the set of "hard core" non-users becomes a higher proportion of all non-users. Current seat belt use saves 11,000 lives and prevents 2 million injuries every year. For each percentage point increase in seat belt use, 3 million more people buckle up, saving approximately 226 lives and preventing over 3,700 injuries each year.

Citizen Centered Programs

Americans expect the government to assure their safety on the highways. NHTSA is responding to the public's insistence on safer vehicle travel and is taking the lead in developing new, as well as supporting proven program interventions. The FY 2003

budget request includes a strong commitment to changing driver behavior, improving vehicle crashworthiness, and sustaining research and development activities to support the agency's behavioral and vehicular programs.

The agency has provided the American public with strong behavioral programs centering on the highway transportation environment. These include impaired driving, occupant protection, and high visibility traffic law enforcement. Recent success in the Click It Or Ticket campaign demonstrates the efficacy of working with our State and local partners to achieve our priorities of increasing seat belt use and reducing impaired driving.

Involvement of our partners in the State and local governments, safety organizations, law enforcement and judicial areas, and the private sector has proven to be the most valuable asset to NHTSA's program success. Throughout FY 2003, we will continue to rely on their expertise and dedication in adapting and implementing innovative and proven strategies, as well as their continuing feedback on successful techniques that the agency can incorporate in future NHTSA programs. Emphasis will be placed on such programs as passing primary enforcement laws, increasing enforcement of current laws, and expanding public education on the benefits of child safety seat and seat belt use.

The success of these partnerships is demonstrated through last year's new Internet-based child safety seat fitting station locator service. Using this on-line service, consumers may obtain local contact information for a child safety seat fitting station or certified child passenger safety technician in their area to ensure safety seats are installed and used correctly. As of December 31, 2001, the website locator had 3,464 child safety seat inspection sites listed, and there were a total of 22,381 certified technicians and 1,037 certified instructors. This year, NHTSA is partnering with Daimler Chrysler to expand and improve our services by adding a toll free number, allowing those without access to a computer to receive fitting station and technician information.

In addition, the NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline will continue to educate the public about vital transportation safety issues and provide a mechanism by which consumers can report potential safety defects in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. In FY 2003, the Hotline will be upgraded, using advanced features that customers have come to expect from a hotline service.

NHTSA Programs Promote Safety and Security Priorities

Safety

We are conducting research on vehicles equipped with advanced occupant protection systems, child restraints, and vehicle tires; new technologies for field data collection; and modifying the existing electronic data collection system; improving National Automotive Sampling System data variables; and continuing to collect data to determine real world effectiveness of child safety seats in reducing injuries to children in motor vehicle

crashes. Additional activities include expanding our compliance test program to incorporate proposed new standards and revisions to existing standards that become effective in FY 2003 and beyond.

FY 2003 will be the first year of implementation of the Child Restraint Ratings Program and the Dynamic Rollover Rating Program for passenger vehicles. Funding in FY 2003 will be used to conduct tests for these two new programs and to develop and disseminate the ratings information to consumers. Other efforts to improve the safe transportation of children in vehicles will be supported through testing to address issues that arise following publication of the final rule on the upgrade to the child restraint standard, FMVSS No. 213. Following the issuance of final rules for new tire pressure monitoring systems, upgraded tire standards, and improved tire labeling for light vehicles, by fall of 2002, the agency will investigate the safety issues concerning retreaded tires on heavy trucks to reduce crashes involving tire failures in heavy vehicles.

Real world crash statistics indicate that 42 percent of tow away frontal crashes are full frontal, and 56 percent are frontal-offset. Even after all cars and light trucks have frontal air bags, we estimate there still would be 8,000 deaths and 120,000 moderate to critical injuries in frontal crashes each year. This budget supports work that will continue toward the issuance of a rule to address occupant protection in frontal offset crashes. Other important crashworthiness safety standards work will include occupant protection in rear impacts, including improved seat strength; school bus and motor coach occupant protection; and upgraded side impact protection. Support also will be provided for improvements in crash avoidance standards, including upgrades to the braking and mirror standards for heavy trucks, and changes to the light vehicle head lighting standard to address the significant public concerns regarding glare. We will continue to conduct systematic assessments of all of our motor vehicle safety standards to ensure that they adequately address current safety problems and vehicle technology developments.

The Final Rule for frontal crash protection, using advanced air bag technologies, necessitates future air bags to be designed to create less risk of serious air bag-induced injuries. The Rule also requires improved frontal crash protection for all occupants. NHTSA is conducting cooperative research with industry in the development of further advanced air bag technologies.

Security

In support of the Department's national security priority, NHTSA's FY 2003 budget includes reviewing and establishing Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards that will contribute towards the more efficient use of fuel necessary for the Nation's transportation needs, as well as decreasing America's dependence on foreign petroleum sources and supply disruptions. Analysis of manufacturers' capability to improve the fuel economy performance of their light duty vehicles; a review of automotive technologies that could achieve higher fuel efficiency; the environmental implications of higher CAFÉ standards; and the economic practicability of emerging technologies will provide the basis for

developing the most cost effective policies to increase fuel economy and to reduce fuel consumption and costs per mile traveled.

In addition, in response to the appalling tragedy of 9-11, our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program will stress the integration of routine EMS response capacity with terrorism readiness resources. The program will emphasize system upgrades that will serve both routine and emergency incidents and mass casualty needs, such as improving surveillance and data collection and strengthening EMS systems through collaboration with public health officials.

Market Based Programs Fostering Competition

Manufacturers continue to look to NHTSA standards and vehicle safety consumer information as a challenge in creativity to upgrade their products to exceed the Federal standards. These challenges have provided bold and innovative achievements in safer vehicle designs and have helped to stimulate a more competitive market place. In addition to the NCAP frontal and side impact ratings program, and the new Child Restraint and the Dynamic Rollover Ratings programs, this budget also provides for vital work in the areas of safety standards compliance, and of equipment testing, with emphasis on child restraint systems. NHTSA's numerous research programs provide greater incentives for manufacturers to engage in their own research. Our program activities strengthen the American economy as well as encourage competition for product safety.

PROGRAM BUDGET DETAILS

SAFETY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS PROGRAMS

Funding of $10.4 million is requested to support the Safety Performance Standards programs that include Safety Standards Support, the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP), and the Fuel Economy and Theft programs.

Safety Standards Support

The budget request of $2 million will support testing and analytical work for issues that arise on the final rule for the child restraint standard upgrade; occupant protection in rear impacts, including seat strength requirements; improving offset frontal crash protection; upgrading safety standards for the next generation of occupant protection systems for school buses; examining standards requirements for potential application to motor coaches; and upgrading side impact safety standards to provide better occupant head protection. Data collection for adapted vehicle safety and for non-crash vehicle related fatalities also would be supported. Crash avoidance rulemaking activities are planned for new requirements for retread tires and tire pressure monitoring systems on commercial vehicles to upgrade the heavy truck braking standard to accommodate electronic control braking systems; to upgrade the heavy truck mirror standard to accommodate cross view

mirrors; to upgrade the light vehicle lighting standard to address issues related to night time glare; and upgrade the motorcycle standard to improve motorcycle braking performance. Cost, weight and lead time studies for rear impact protection and bus emergency exits and window retention/release rulemakings also will be supported. Consumer information work will consist of developing new campaigns and materials on new and emerging vehicle safety issues, addressing safe towing practices, and continuing and expanding the Tire Safety Information campaign. Work will continue on the technology assessments needed to implement regulatory review for standards that have not had significant updates for many years.

New Car Assessment Program

Funding of $7.3 million for the New Car Assessment program (NCAP) will support frontal and side impact testing. The testing will represent about 80 percent of new vehicles when combined with carry-over results from previous years on vehicles whose designs have not changed. The tests will be split almost evenly between frontal and side tests. In FY 2003, tripped rollover resistance using the static stability factor will be measured for approximately 100 vehicles. These tests will provide results for the same percentage. The NCAP program also will support approximately 100 tests to measure braking performance and numerous tests to evaluate headlighting performance for planned NCAP crash avoidance ratings. NCAP funding also supports Consumer Information program activities to develop and deliver NCAP crash test results and safety information through brochures, campaigns, web-site enhancements and marketing initiatives. Increased program funding will allow the agency to meet the requirements of the TREAD Act.

New NCAP information for the Child Restraint Ratings and the Dynamic Rollover Rating programs will be developed and distributed to the public. NCAP funds also will be used to conduct consumer research activities to determine the type of information most helpful to consumers and the best ways to present it; develop information for new campaigns and materials on high interest issues, such as tire safety, braking performance, and other emerging issues; expand the methods for disseminating vehicle safety consumer information to reach more people; and develop diversity initiatives and materials to better reach underserved populations.

Fuel Economy Program

A total of $1 million is requested for the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program. To allow NHTSA to properly resume its responsibility for evaluating and setting CAFE standards many actions must be taken in FY 2003. Responses to a Request for Comment published in February 2002 will assist the agency in determining what Model Years 2005-2010 light truck CAFE standards are feasible and provide feedback on the findings and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences study that was released on January 28, 2002. The agency must publish a final rule by April 1, 2003. FY 2003 funds will be needed to complete work on several studies, including a manufacturers' capability study, a technology review, an environmental assessment, an

economic analysis, and an update and expansion of the CAFE database. These studies are needed in order to ensure that any changes in fuel economy standards or the CAFE program are based on sound science and will improve fuel economy without compromising safety or costing American jobs.

SAFETY ASSURANCE PROGRAMS

The FY 2003 budget requests $15.8 million for Safety Assurance that includes the Vehicle Safety Compliance, the Defects Investigation, and the Odometer Fraud programs.

Vehicle Safety Compliance Program

In FY 2003, the agency is requesting $7.5 million for the Vehicle Safety Compliance program. We will conduct full-scale crash testing of new motor vehicles for verifying compliance with, among other things, the safety standards for frontal occupant crash protection (20 tests); dynamic side impact protection (20 tests); upper interior head protection (15 tests); dynamic rear and side fuel system integrity (20 tests); and side impact pole tests (4 tests) to assess performance of new technology for head protection introduced in new vehicles. NHTSA also will continue its equipment testing program, with emphasis on child restraint systems. In addition, the agency will expand its compliance test program to incorporate proposed new standards and revisions to existing standards that become effective during FY 2003 and beyond.

Safety Defects Investigation Program

The Safety Defects Investigation Program identifies motor vehicles and items of motor vehicle equipment that contain safety-related defects and ensures that they are either repaired or removed from the Nation's highways. In calendar year 2000, about 14 percent of the recalls for safety-related defects (representing over 54 percent of the vehicles recalled) were influenced by NHTSA investigations. New initiatives under the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act include issuing an "early warning" regulation requiring manufacturers to provide extensive information about possible safety defects. The FY 2003 request for the program is $8.1 million. In addition to supporting ongoing investigations, these funds will allow NHTSA to finalize acquisition and implementation of a data warehouse for the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI). This data warehouse will accommodate the additional data to be submitted under the TREAD Act and will provide ODI investigators with improved analytical capabilities, allowing the agency to proactively identify potential safety problems in a timely manner. ODI will also continue to address petitions requesting investigations into alleged safety problems; monitor recalls to assure that the scope of the vehicles included and the remedy are adequate; continue its outreach programs; and expand the public's access to ODI files through the Internet.

Odometer Fraud Program

Odometer tampering continues to be a serious crime and a consumer fraud issue. In addition to conducting investigations of large-scale interstate odometer fraud cases for criminal prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Odometer Fraud staff works very closely with State enforcement agencies, supporting their enforcement programs. The FY 2003 funding request is $150 thousand. In FY 2003, the agency plans to enter into cooperative agreements with four States to train investigators and support State odometer fraud programs.

HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAMS

NTHSA requests $41.2 million for Highway Safety Programs. Funding will continue to deliver an effective behavioral program to reduce traffic deaths and injuries and achieve the agency's goals in reducing impaired driving and increasing occupant protection.

Impaired Driving Program

NHTSA set a new goal for impaired driving to reduce the rate of alcohol-related highway fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled to 0.53 by 2003. This remains an ambitious goal, since the number of impaired driving fatalities rose in 2000 for the first time since 1995. The NHTSA program, at $9.6 million, will continue to focus on a four-prong approach: prevention and education; enforcement and adjudication; legislation; and outreach through partnerships. In addition to the current programs, NHTSA will complete highly publicized enforcement demonstrations in five States and promote the best practices that these evaluations produced. We will continue with two additional demonstration States and engage partners in activities to support enforcement and prevention efforts. We will also demonstrate the driver history information records systems data model in several States; continue training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges on issues related to detecting and sentencing impaired drivers; support the development of new materials under the You Drink and Drive. You Lose. campaign; and prioritize and implement recommendations from the Criminal Justice Summit.

Drugs, Driving and Youth

The major objective of the Drugs, Driving, and Youth Program is to reduce drug-impaired driving among youth. NHTSA continues to support the recommendations identified in the Initiative on Drugs, Driving and Youth, which addressed strengthening State laws; intensifying State and local enforcement programs; implementing youth-focused education efforts; and providing grants to States to initiate programs and laws focusing on impaired youth driving. In FY 2003, funding in the amount of $1.2 million is requested. In addition to the current impaired driving programs, NHTSA will expand State enforcement demonstrations in two additional States, Indiana and Michigan. The

agency will develop and pilot test new comprehensive strategies, including speeding, zero tolerance, and seat belt violations, for reaching the increasing youth population. NHTSA will continue work with the college community to reduce underage drinking and increase zero tolerance enforcement. In addition, NHTSA will focus on developing additional resources for prosecuting and adjudicating the repeat and high alcohol blood concentration (BAC) offender, including treatment and sanctioning alternatives. Action grants will be awarded to national organizations, advocacy groups, and criminal justice partners to support highly visible enforcement and prevention activities. NHTSA will continue the national impaired driving public education campaign to keep the issue in the forefront of public attention. The agency is continuing to work with States and other partners to implement State alcohol forums to examine State data and develop action plans and coalitions for reducing alcohol-related deaths and injuries.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

The budget requests $1.3 million to support comprehensive pedestrian, bicycle, and school bus safety programs. New FY 2003 initiatives include: pilot testing and completing the school bus driver training program; working with the Head Start program to develop age-appropriate pedestrian safety training programs for children and their care givers; encouraging the adoption of innovative pedestrian enforcement strategies by providing small demonstration grants to communities; and conducting case studies to determine the effectiveness of the Texas mandate for bicycle education in elementary schools.

Motorcycle Safety

The budget requests $645 thousand to support a comprehensive motorcycle safety program. NHTSA will continue to work with a wide array of partners (e.g., motorcycling organizations, manufacturers, health and medical professionals, and engineers) to support implementation of selected recommendations in the National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety. The agency will continue to support initiatives begun in FY 2002, including identification of best practices in motorcycle training and licensing and identification of potential countermeasures to reverse the increases in fatalities among older motorcyclists. NHTSA will continue to support State efforts to enact motorcycle helmet laws; to respond to repeal efforts by distributing technical assistance materials upon request; to support innovative strategies to prevent impaired motorcycle crashes; and to increase motorist awareness of motorcyclists. Efforts will be made to work with national organizations, especially public health groups, to educate their members about motorcycle safety issues and provide workshops and exhibits at national meetings.

Occupant Protection

The FY 2003 budget proposal of $11.2 million focuses on three major areas: seat belts, child passenger safety (including booster seats), and air bags, while continuing efforts to reach the national goals of 78 percent seat belt use by 2003 and reducing child passenger fatalities (0-4 years) by 25 percent by 2005. Strategies to reach the goals include expanded partnerships; public education; highly visible enforcement; passage of effective

laws; and implementing new technologies. Activities include conducting semi-annual Operation America Buckles Up Children mobilizations; documenting best practices learned from Section 403 demonstration programs and Sections 157 and 405 grant programs; and expanding partnerships with diverse organizations and other high risk and hard to reach populations. NHTSA will also expand its outreach to minority audiences with national media campaigns through the Advertising Council, minority media contractors, and the utilization of credible spokespersons. The Spanish language campaign companion low English proficiency materials will be expanded. Child Passenger Safety technician training will be provided to Spanish speaking organizations, and additional training for Urban African Americans will be conducted. NHTSA plans a community demonstration initiative to increase the seat belt use among sport utility vehicle occupants due to the high rollover rate seen in these vehicles. To improve child passenger safety, the agency will expand and improve a web application designed to provide consumers with information on the selection, use, and installation of child restraints in both English and Spanish; conduct a Child Passenger Safety Week; develop initiatives to increase booster seat use for children between 40 to 80 pounds; and expand the network of public and private sector child safety fitting stations across the country.

In addition, air bag safety activities include educating used car buyers on air bag safety issues; expanding public information and education to promote awareness of existing air bag issues and emerging air bag technologies; and re-educating the public on dangers associated with the interaction between air bags and front seat occupants, including individuals of short stature, pregnant women, infants, and small children.

Traffic Law Enforcement

The Traffic Law Enforcement (TLE) request of $2.1 million supports efforts to increase seat belt use and to reduce impaired driving, speeding, aggressive driving, and other unsafe driving acts and continue its efforts to promote seat belt and child safety seat use as a primary responsibility of our Nation's law enforcement agencies. New initiatives will include the development of model speed enforcement guidelines based on lessons learned from NHTSA and FHWA sponsored speed management demonstration projects; expansion of the community demonstration projects with both the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) and the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association to promote traffic safety in diverse communities; expansion of training designed to reemphasize a broad based traffic enforcement program; expansion of training designed to reemphasize a broad based traffic enforcement program; expansion of training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges to heighten emphasis on aggressive driving; creation of a model process to help law enforcement agencies improve their traffic safety planning process; sponsorship of a summit to identify the gaps in the criminal justice system and to make recommendations for corrections; and implementation of a traffic enforcement technology project to demonstrate and measure the impact of effective and efficient traditional and automated enforcement technologies. NHTSA will also continue to collaborate with Federal, State, and local partners to address the issue of racial profiling.

Emergency Medical Services

The FY 2003 budget requests $2.2 million for emergency medical services (EMS) to fulfill NHTSA's leadership and system development roles. The FY 2003 EMS program will stress the integration of routine EMS response capacity with terrorism readiness resources. The program will stress system upgrades that will serve both routine and emergency incidents and mass casualty needs, such as improving surveillance and data collection and strengthening EMS systems through collaboration with public health offices. During FY 2003, the EMS program will maintain focus on the strategic plan laid out in the EMS Agenda for the Future, creating new tools and incentives for mobilizing emergency medical professionals to conduct community injury prevention activities, and developing new methods for assessing the community value of EMS systems. The Education Agenda is a comprehensive plan for building an efficient and effective system for educating new emergency medical technicians. NHTSA will disseminate technical assistance to support nationwide implementation of wireless E9-1-1; develop a National Model Scope of Practice for EMS providers; and market EMS programs, including Bystander Care, to State and local affiliates of national organizations.

Highway Safety Research

The request of $7.1 million for highway safety behavioral research supports efforts to determine the causes of crashes; identify target populations; measure perceptions and awareness levels; develop and test countermeasures; and evaluate the effectiveness of programs to reduce traffic deaths, injuries, and associated monetary costs. New research and evaluation initiatives in FY 2003 will develop and test strategies to increase correct child restraint seat use; examine various technological approaches to increase seat belt use; analyze belt use patterns from direct recording data; determine the effectiveness of saturation patrols to reduce impaired driving; initiate a study, in cooperation with the European Union, of the incidence of driving under the influence of drugs other than alcohol; evaluate the effectiveness of assessment and rehabilitation programs for older drivers; initiate a field test of a new system to reduce illegal passing of stopped school buses; conduct a national survey of pedestrian and bicyclist behavior; and examine trends in speed related crashes.

Emerging Issues

NHTSA investigates new traffic risks as they emerge, such as driver fatigue, increased use of cellular phones and other electronic devices while driving, and the growing number of older drivers. The FY 2003 request of $1.2 million funds activities including creating public education and information programs aimed at reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities resulting from these new safety risks. NHTSA will provide materials to law enforcement officers and the drivers they stop who are drowsy (rather than impaired by drugs or alcohol); broaden the social marketing effort previously targeted to older drivers, their families, and health care providers to include State driver licensing agencies and the law enforcement community; and use new research findings to further refine public

education directed toward users of cellular phones and other telematics and additional distractions to inform drivers about risks to themselves and others.

Traffic Records and Driver Licensing

The budget request includes $2.5 million for the Traffic Records and Driver Licensing program to support the agency's increased emphasis on the availability and use of traffic records. The FY 2003 program will continue its efforts to improve the timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of State traffic records systems. Driver licensing and education focuses on implementation of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Systems. Funding will support State and local acquisition and analysis of traffic safety data that is necessary to effectively manage traffic safety activities such as alcohol, safety belt, and GDL programs. These programs have been shown to be an effective means to reduce the fatality and injury crash involvement of young novice drivers, with a 9 percent reduction in Florida, a 26 percent reduction in North Carolina, and a 27 percent reduction in Michigan.

National Driver Register (NDR)

The National Driver Register assists State motor vehicle administrators in communicating with other States to identify problem drivers. The total number of inquiries has increased 69.9 percent from 1993 to 2000. More importantly, during the same time period, the number of the more expensive interactive (real time) inquiries has increased 321 percent (8.5 million to 35.8 million). The FY 2003 program is requesting $1.1 million. NHTSA will continue to strive to meet its customer service goal of: (1) an average response time of four seconds, with all inquiries responded to within seven seconds; and (2) to be available for operation 99 percent of published operational hours. The Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999 requires the States to make NDR inquiries for all license issuances. Currently, States are required to make inquiries for all non-minimum age license applicants and encouraged to check renewals. NHTSA estimates that the number of inquiries could increase 20 to 50 percent. This requirement will have a significant impact on operating costs.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PROGRAMS

The FY 2003 Research and Analysis request, in the amount of $56 million, consists of support for biomechanics, crashworthiness, crash avoidance, driver/vehicle performance, and heavy vehicle research. The funding requested also supports pneumatic tire research required by the TREAD Act. In addition, the request includes the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, which provides vital data on traffic crashes to the agency, the Department, State and local governments, and the private sector.

National Transportation Biomechanics Research Center (NTBRC)

The budget request of $14 million represents a continuation of the FY 2002 level, which supports the four major efforts pursued by the NTBRC. Biomechanics research is the cornerstone upon which many of the agency's performance-based occupant safety initiatives are and will be based. NHTSA will continue to fund seven Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network (CIREN) centers, as well as a variety of impact injury research, human simulation and analysis, crash test dummy component development, and biomechanics of air bag injuries research efforts. The agency is continuing its research program to understand the special crash protection needs of the elderly.

Crashworthiness Research

The budget requests $9 million for the crashworthiness research program. This funding will assist the agency in enhancing vehicle occupant protection by providing improvements in vehicle structural and interior compartment design, in combination with improvements in occupant restraint systems. Achieving these improvements requires research in analysis of real world crash experience; development of test procedures that reproduce the crash environment; evaluation of injury likelihood from crash test measurements; development and evaluation of effective vehicle countermeasures; and estimates of potential safety benefits. To the extent possible, the program also fosters, through research, international harmonization of future standards in the areas of pedestrian, frontal offset, side impact, and vehicle compatibility.

The FY 2003 research program will continue research to support upgrading safety standards for frontal crash protection, side impact protection, roof crush protection, ejection prevention, fuel system integrity, and child safety. The activities include the development of test devices and test procedures suitable for compliance testing. The agency will continue to conduct research to address the issue of vehicle compatibility by analyzing crash data and fleet characteristics to define the safety problem and to develop appropriate test procedures for evaluating aggressiveness of vehicles. The research program also includes development of suitable countermeasures to address safety problems, and evaluation of the effectiveness of countermeasures developed. The side impact research will continue to include full vehicle crash testing to support the short and long-term rulemaking activities; analysis of the current and future U.S. crash environment; and testing of vehicles to assess potential for harmonization and for generating new consumer information. The program will be expanded to include research on advanced restraint systems, such as adaptive air bags and inflatable belt systems; pre-crash radar and other sensing technologies; and automatically adjusting foot pedal controls to suit various size occupants.

Crash Avoidance

Funding of $6.9 million is requested to support both driver/vehicle performance and driver behavior programs. A primary emphasis of the program continues to include understanding driver workload and reducing driver distraction from in-vehicle devices. NHTSA research will continue its driver distraction program to support four key

objectives: (1) understanding the dimensions of the safety problem; (2) measuring the impact of different distractions on the driving task; (3) identifying equipment interface approaches that minimize driver attention demands; and (4) developing effective social behavioral change programs. A major research initiative on adaptive driver interface to minimize distraction potential and driver workload management is planned. Research will focus on quantifying the safety impact of distraction through unobtrusive observations of distracting driver behaviors on the road; assessing voice interfaces as a possible solution when technologies distract drivers from their primary task of driving; and working with industry to develop requirements for integrated driver support systems to automatically prevent drivers from being unsafely distracted. Research will support behavioral change programs by identifying factors affecting drivers' willingness to engage in distracting tasks and by conducting surveys to determine individual differences in how distracting tasks impact driver performance. Some of this research will be conducted using the National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS); addressing development and evaluation of new Crash Avoidance technologies and driver behavior, performance and other research issues in the future. Among these is the analysis of the complex driver-vehicle-environment interactions that are a contributing cause of more than three-quarters of all vehicle crashes. Furthermore, the development of standardized NADS test procedures and scenarios will ensure comparability of data collection across the range of studies planned and allow the development of a comprehensive driver data resource that can support the development of models to help predict driver behavior and performance under a variety of conditions. Two additional research programs will be initiated. These include the effects of age-related impairments on driver behavior and performance and the effects of drug use (prescription and non-prescription) on driver.

Pneumatic Tire Research

The TREAD Act requires that the agency conduct rulemaking to revise and update the existing tire standards, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards Nos.109 and 119. The Act also requires NHTSA to complete rulemaking to establish a regulation to require a pressure warning system in new motor vehicles to indicate when a tire is significantly under inflated. In FY 2001, NHTSA initiated a tire pressure survey; an assessment of pressure warning systems in light vehicles; and research into such crash prevention aspects of tire performance as high speed capability, endurance capability, and tire distortion from normal road and maneuvering conditions. This research provided a solid foundation for the required regulatory actions program for upgrading the standard, conducting a tire pressure survey, and conducting research on several types of pressure warning systems. It also provided a basis for additional efforts to improve the safety performance of tires. Research was also initiated to study tire debeading and tire strength requirements. In FY 2003, $613 thousand is requested to continue pneumatic tire research in these and other areas, such as adhesion performance of internal components of tires, accelerated aging of tires, and testing tires under aged conditions.

Heavy Vehicles

Funding of $2.2 million is requested for NHTSA's efforts under the Department's initiative to reduce fatalities in heavy vehicle-related crashes by 50 percent by the start of the year 2010. The major focus of NHTSA's heavy truck program will continue to be improving braking performance. Decreases in stopping distances from highway speeds of up to 30 percent are believed to be possible by using disc brakes, much more powerful front axle brakes, and electronic control of brakes. Development of pre-crash data recorders will help to better define the causes of heavy vehicle crashes. The agency is evaluating the feasibility of using aerodynamics, similar to devices used by NASCAR race cars. We also are investigating adaptive suspension systems, which could be used to counteract incipient rollover; and stability enhancement systems that can be made a part of electronically controlled braking systems. In addition, research on improved side and rearward visibility and the elimination of blind spots will continue, as will research into improved truck occupant protection countermeasures. The agency is researching the possibility of future replacement of mirrors in heavy trucks and buses with video systems. This could result in eliminating blind spots, providing vastly improved vision at night, and reducing the wind resistance of heavy vehicles, resulting in greater fuel economy. Beginning in FY 2003, the agency will initiate a long-term research program to study the human factors associated with these closed circuit video systems.

Intelligent Vehicle Initiative (IVI)

The Intelligent Vehicle Initiative (IVI) is focused on improving safety through the use of advanced intelligent technologies for collision avoidance purposes. The aim of this departmental research program is to develop a better understanding of why crashes occur and to determine how advanced technologies can be utilized to reduce the number of crashes and mitigate injuries when crashes do occur. Design improvements are accomplished by ensuring that the introduction of new in-vehicle systems does not degrade safety and by facilitating the development, deployment, and evaluation of effective driver warning collision avoidance systems. In FY 2003, NHTSA accomplishments will include: (1) completion of the Automotive Collision Avoidance System Field Operational Test; (2) initiation of the data collection phase of the Road Departure Crash Warning System Field Operational Test; (3) completion of the majority of work on the Collision Avoidance Metrics Partnership project to develop fundamental pre-competitive research on crash avoidance technology, human factors, and creation of safety-focused map data bases; (4) initiation of a Field Operational Test of a heavy vehicle, driver drowsiness alerting system; (5) continuation of the development of realizable vehicle-based countermeasures for collisions that occur at intersections; and (6) continuation of efforts to find solutions to the problem of distraction from in-vehicle systems. Funding in the amount of $22 million is included in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) budget. This amount is for the total IVI research program. A portion of this amount will be allocated to NHTSA for the light vehicle research component of the IVI program.

National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS)

The National Advanced Driving Simulator installation, testing, and acceptance at the University of Iowa have been completed. NADS became operational in June 2001, thereby completing Phase II of the TRW development contract. No funding is requested for the NADS development in FY 2003. However, funding has been requested under the Crash Avoidance Program for NADS-based research, which includes support for both ITS and human factors safety-related programs. Currently, NADS research is underway to investigate how drivers react to sudden tire failures.

National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA)

The budget request for NCSA is $22.3 million. Funding provides for collection and analyses of data on traffic crashes and their outcomes. These activities are vital to the traffic safety programs of NHTSA, FHWA, FMCSA, and other Departmental programs, State and local governments, as well as vehicle manufacturers, insurers, and highway safety public interest groups.

NCSA operates the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). This data collection system provides a census of all fatal highway crashes in the United States. It is an essential data source for its customers (internal agency and departmental modes and offices, other Federal agencies, States, research organizations, and interest groups). These data are analyzed and disseminated for widespread use. Activities will include: collecting and coding the data from all 50 States, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico; creating the electronic data files, consisting of about 41,500 crashes; and creating and delivering FARS system-wide training to all analysts. New initiatives include geographical coding of all FARS cases to provide locational analyses capabilities; improving customer service through FARS website enhancements; and linking the FARS data base with other national data bases.

Additionally, in-depth information on traffic crashes is obtained through the National Automotive Sampling System's (NASS) Crashworthiness Data System (CDS). A network of over 60 trained automotive crash investigators conduct approximately 4,000 detailed crash investigations in 24 locations throughout the country. Nationally representative data on crashes occurring in the United States is vitally important to the agency and to other users. NASS data are used to assess the tendency and magnitude of the crashes in this country, and the NASS Crashworthiness Data System provides more in-depth and descriptive data of occupants and vehicles in real world crashes. The FY 2003 budget request is $10.57 million. New initiatives for FY 2003 include improved access of data files for on-line data retrieval and analysis; improved crash severity indicators used on regulatory initiatives; conducting investigations on vehicles equipped with advanced occupant protection system devices, child restraints, and vehicle tires; new technologies for field data collection; improving current NASS data variables; and continuing to collect data to determine real world effectiveness of child safety seats in reducing injuries to children in motor vehicle crashes, in support of the TREAD Act.

The Special Crash Investigation (SCI) program, requesting $1.7 million for FY 2003, identifies and documents the effects of new technologies in a timely manner so that the

impact on motor vehicle crashes can be assessed quickly. SCI investigation is the only method to document the crash circumstances, identify the injury mechanisms, evaluate safety countermeasure effectiveness, and provide an early detection mechanism for alleged or potential vehicle defects. In FY 2003, SCI will investigate over 200 crashes, including those involving advanced air bag systems, side air bags, and children in LATCH safety seats. The latter will allow NHTSA to evaluate the effectiveness of these emerging occupant-protection systems in real-world crashes.

The Data Analysis program, requesting $2 million, provides critical analytical support to the various agency program offices to accomplish their missions, such as the development of crashworthiness and crash avoidance rulemaking, identification of target populations, and monitoring and reporting of traffic safety trends. New initiatives for FY 2003 include: reviewing new technology to upgrade, as appropriate, the current customer service response and tracking systems; improving timeliness of responding to customers' requests for the latest traffic safety crash data and information through technological and process improvement activities; reviewing and updating, when appropriate, of existing periodic reports; and conducting analyses and providing reports in support of agency programs.

The State Data Program is also a part of the NCSA. State crash data provide information for analyses and data collection programs that support NHTSA's mission. Program activities assist analysts and States in their efforts to understand how to improve the quality and utility of their crash data files. In FY 2003, the program is requesting $2.5 million in funding. A major activity will be to support implementation by all States of a uniform guideline for State crash data. NHTSA promotes the linkage and use of linked crash and injury State data through a collaborative funding program for States. When merged, the linked data have extraordinary value for highway safety at the national level. In the process, the linked data will be standardized, and quality measures will be developed. Technical assistance, sponsoring research and meetings, demonstrating linked data base usefulness, and awarding grants to additional States as they qualify with the necessary crash and medical outcome data files will continue to be priority activities.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY GRANTS

Through our performance-based grant program, NHTSA has assisted all States in identifying their unique highway safety issues, developing strategies, and implementing effective programs. NHTSA's State grant programs support key Departmental initiatives, including goals for increasing seat belt use nationwide and reducing alcohol-involved fatalities. Each State has a critical role to play in the broad-based regional and National strategic plans developed to meet the National goals. The requested $225 million in State grant funds for FY 2003 is critical to meeting the departmental highway safety goals. In view of the high economic toll caused by traffic crashes, over $150 billion annually, our budget request is a small investment in State highway safety support.

The Section 402 State and Community Formula Grant Program request for FY 2003 is $165 million. It provides for a coordinated national highway safety program in every State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Trust Territories, and the Indian Nations for the purpose of reducing highway crashes, deaths, and injuries. In FY 2003, all States and territories will be continuing the performance-based management process. Section 402 formula grants support programs, developed and managed by the States, to address their highway safety goals, performance measures, and strategic plans.

The FY 2003 Section 402 formula request will support national priority programs, such as encouraging proper use of occupant protection devices; reducing alcohol and drug-impaired driving; reducing motorcycle crashes; improving police traffic services; improving emergency medical services and trauma care systems; increasing pedestrian and bicyclist safety; improving traffic record systems; and improving roadway safety. In addition, this funding will enable States to continue and expand the Safe Communities initiative, a community-based injury control approach to reducing traffic-related injuries.

Incentive grant programs provide States with extensive flexibility. States have the option to apply for these grants. If a state chooses to pursue a grant, the state may choose which legal and program criteria to implement. NHTSA's incentive grant programs are:

- Section 410 Alcohol-impaired Driving Countermeasures Incentive Grant Program (requesting $40 million for FY 2003) rewards States that enact stronger laws and start effective programs to stop drunk drivers and states that demonstrate consistently high performance in reducing alcohol-related fatality rates.

- Section 405 Occupant Protection Incentive Grant Program (requesting $20 million for FY 2003) rewards States that implement strong laws and programs to increase safety belt and child safety seat use.

Formula funds are spread over a wide range of highway safety issues, according to goals and priorities set by the States, and much of the funding is focused on community-level programs. Incentive funds target national priority initiatives that can make the biggest impact on the safety bottom line. Incentive funds are used to encourage States to implement tough laws and programs Statewide. When the States take the hard steps, the reward is extra funding to help support their efforts.

CONCLUSION

Madam Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. In closing, I would like to thank you for your continued support of highway safety. I look forward to working with you in developing a strong and productive performance-based, results-oriented, FY 2003 highway safety budget that will provide National leadership through effective and efficient programs. I would be pleased to answer any questions.